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ABSTRACT

This study examined the underlying tensions between three school decision-making groups regarding the inclusion of Native cultural and language content in the curriculum of a tribally-controlled elementary school in a Canadian Anishinabek community. Except for one teacher, all members of the parent school advisory group, the tribal education committee, and the teacher group agreed that Native culture and history should be included in the school curriculum, but opinions varied concerning the extent of inclusion. Teachers felt the real challenge involved human resources, physical resources, and planning. The education committee and the parent school advisory group recommended as much as one quarter to one half of the school day be devoted to Native language instruction or use. The teachers agreed that the language is important but felt that a realistic use of the language would be 5-10 percent of the day. All decision-makers agreed on the importance of Elders and other community resource people to the children's education, but the teachers rarely drew upon them as key resources because of time and planning constraints. All parties agreed on the importance of including sacred and significant places and events in the curriculum, but occurrences of such activities were rare due to concerns over safety, supervision, and planning. Teachers are faced with enormous pressures of meeting an externally imposed curricular agenda, which poses challenges for incorporating Native knowledge into the curriculum. Appendices present each group's survey responses. (Contains 11 references.) (TD)

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Sagamok Anishnawbek: The Decision Makers and Varying Conceptions of Cultural Inclusion at Beedaban School

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Abstract

The following article examines the underlying tensions between three First Nations decision-making bodies; a Parent School Advisory Group, Education Committee and Elementary School Teachers in regards to the Native cultural and language content in the classroom. The goal of the research was to explore and present the concepts, beliefs, practices, worldview and values that underlie and/or guide decisions related to an Aboriginal education issue. The site for this discussion is Beedaban Elementary School on Sagamok First Nation which is a small Anishinabek (Ojibwe, Odawa & Pottawatomi) community located on the north shores of Lake Huron.

Introduction

> Culture, history and traditions are vital to the very existence of a group of people such as the Anishinabek nation. – Parent, Sagamok First Nation

This article is a demonstration of the hope, faith and determination of a community in reconstruction. The story of Sagamok First Nation is a compelling one. Historically located in a colonial situation that permeated every aspect of cultural and societal life, the people of this community never lost their sense of identity. They are and continue to be the Anishinabek people that have long endured the attempted genocide of their Nation. The tool used by various external institutions (government, religious organizations, agents of both) to absorb Native peoples into the Canadian Melting Pot have primarily been schools. The legacy of education for Native people within this community has been often been a disturbing one. The present reality of schooling is one that has been borne out of that imposed oppression, as this community grapples with the complexity of self-determination in education.

The discussion that will take place throughout this article has been organized in this manner: formal and informal learning, historical perspectives, current tensions and future directions. The necessity of talking about formal and informal learning is critical to this body of research. Formal learning has historically been positioned above the informal. As a result of this inequity we see externally imposed concepts of what constitutes the formal over writing culturally recognized forms of knowing (the informal). Native people have been placed in situations where their own forms of knowledge have been positioned as subordinate to external institutions. The necessity of discussing the history of education in Sagamok First Nation is also critical to this research. The current state of schooling in this community did not happen in an ahistorical manner. One cannot begin to consider issues in First Nations communities without having the historical context in which it was borne. This First Nation did not escape the forces that shaped the imperialist relations between Native peoples and schools. The

discussion of the current reality is also a necessity due in part to the nature of this research which is to explore those present tensions in educational decision making. The discussion involves the visions, voices and realities of three bodies of decision makers in Sagamok First Nation that affect the level and content (external/internal) of schooling in this community. The final section is a reflective component that discusses anticipated movements in education within the community of Sagamok First Nation.

Formal and Informal Learning

The struggle between the definitions of formal and informal learning and what constitutes these concepts is the first place we need to begin. For the purposes of this paper working definitions of formal and informal learning will be presented and articulated. Formal learning is regarded as those structured activities that take place within the perimeters of the classroom. These activities include all those curricular proceedings (goals, expectations, teaching methods/strategies, evaluation techniques) that occur through a societal acceptance of what counts as education (Miller & Seller, p. 3, 1990). This often is institutionalized and disseminated through a larger decision making body; which is in this case the Ministry of Education and Training. Formal learning of students is seen as measurable and recognized as the necessary knowledge base required for continued schooling. Formal learning includes the delivery of subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science and technology, social studies (history and geography for grades 7 & 8), the arts, physical and health education and native language (www.edu.gov.on.ca). These subjects are regulated and the curriculum guidelines as set out by the Ministry of Education have been adopted by Sagamok First Nation for the purposes of its First Nations School. The tensions underlying the adoption of these guidelines poses many problems for a community such as this one. The first main problem is that the implementation of an external curriculum has delineated from a more Anishinabek inclusive school. As the teachers attempt to meet the new set of curriculum guidelines they do so at the expense of informal learning. This referring to a body of indigenous knowledge that is currently making it's long journey to being recognized throughout the province. Informal learning is therefore equated with the lived expression of the epistemology, axiology and ontology of Native peoples.[1]

Why are these definitions necessary to understanding this research? The continuing challenge of this First Nation School is the range of inclusion of Anishinabek cosmology and ways of knowing. Indigenous knowledge does not exist separated from life itself (sacred from the secular). Knowledge and experience are intimately connected. In the current school situation, knowledge is presented in such a manner that renders it as easily measurable. It is compact. Learning is measured by an external set of codes. Teachers review the expectations in a certain subject area, plan accordingly and students are tested based on these expectations. Knowledge in this First Nations School is therefore based upon a primarily external body. This is not necessarily seen as a negative situation. During one of the education audits performed by Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (2000) in relation to Native culture/language content, the general public in Sagamok agreed that they wished to have their children provided with full access and advantage to outside schools (a bicultural education). The resulting decision meant that the curriculum of Beedaban Elementary School should reflect this community-based decision. This did not mean that the community of Sagamok was rejecting the inclusion of it's culture, history and language, but what it meant was that the community of Sagamok First Nation envisioned their future generations as schooled in a manner that gave them access to all worlds. The primary goal meant providing a balanced education whilst supporting the identity of our Anishinabek children in the school.

The struggle with informal and formal learning is deeply rooted in their historical orientations and positions within the education system. We see a subtle shift from a full emphasis on the formal to an acceptance and acknowledgement of the informal. This is a reflection of the times we live in. We see the representation of learning and knowledge shifts being expressed in the classroom. We see the manifestation of these shifts being expressed in the curricular directives coming from external institutions that have been self empowered with these decisions (colonial power = Ministry of Education). The shift was a necessary one that occurred in response to societal changes in the province and within First Nations themselves. Indigenous communities have been arguing for more holistic and inclusive schools since the 1970's (National Indian Brotherhood) and we see the discourse of that inclusiveness being emanated from a multitude of educational circles (academia, College of Teachers,

etc). The formal and the informal have now come to an interesting crossroads in Sagamok First Nation. The spirit of self-determination in education now poses as the backdrop for one of the most interesting discussions in this community. What tensions evolve as a result of the disintegrating boundaries between the formal and the informal? What are the tensions and arguments between these decision makers in this community? What is truly valued in an Anishinabek controlled school?

History of Education in Sagamok First Nation

The history of education in Sagamok First Nation has been a disturbing one. Most memories reported by adults in their experiences with schools have been of a negative nature. This legacy has resulted in many community members' relaying instances of abuses and humiliation in schools. These types of negative experiences occurred in residential schools, federal day schools, public schools and separate schools. Native people have historically been robbed of the opportunity to provide an education for their children that was representative of their dreams and visions. Through the power of the Indian Act the federal government directed certain religious and provincial bodies to implement some form of Indian Education. That form of education never included an acceptance of Native people as equals: as people that were distinct in their culture, language and ways of knowing. This form of education never validated the self worth of people in Sagamok First Nation. Nor was it ever intended to do so. The education of Native people has always been about assimilation, segregation or integration into the Canadian multicultural body politic (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, p. 5, 1994).

Many of our people attended the infamous Spanish Residential School or Shingwauk Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie. They were taken from their homes and placed in an institution that was comparable to an existence of prison life (Haig Brown, p. 108, 1998). Many of our people in Sagamok survived such incarceration, but the effects of these schools have become primordial events in the lived culture of this community.[2] Residential schools were intentionally set up as institutions that aimed at civilizing and Christianizing a race of people. These schools have had global ramifications as most indigenous peoples have experienced the trauma and effects of such a colonial and genocidal education. Cross the border into the United States and the name changes to Industrial Schools; the intent masked but still aimed at preparing Natives to occupy low level working class occupations. The stories that come from these schools (cross border) have been overwrought with media sensationalized tales of sexual abuse. This is a reality for many of our Native people in Canada that attended these schools, of which the people of Sagamok First Nation did not escape. The dehumanization of our people in Sagamok was so severe at times that it is truly a miracle that our people survived. Viewed by the agents of these institutions in a manner that was similar to cattle, our people in Sagamok First Nation have provided testimony to the strength and hope of our Nation. To illustrate the less than human approach that was taken when dealing with Natives we refer to Figure 1.0 which is a copy of an original nominal roll for girls attending Spanish Residential School. As stated earlier, many people from this community attended there.

The federal day schools were institutions built within the confines of the reservation. Sagamok residents have seen and experienced their share of federal day schools, school inspectors and teachers committed to this form of education. These schools were set up with the same intention of obliterating the Indianness out of Native children. My recent doctoral research in this community has demonstrated the genocidal agenda these schools had in their attempts to eradicate Native culture and language. One community member provides this reflection on his experience with schooling and agents of these institutions,

> The whole thing was based on not being proud of who you were, rather the, rather you be proud of something that you can be which is not yourself, and in my mind that's not, that doesn't make any sense, and you feel if you're Anishinabe in those days, if you went to town, if you went outside your own community, you're very, you're very, very aware who you were, yes I mean definitely stood out and the people that were there I think made you quite aware that you were Anishinabe, almost like ah put down [pause] and then any kind of authority that would encounter out of the community was white, police were white, teachers were white, the priests were white you know, so any kind of authority that you saw or encountered was white. (52 year old male, personal communication, July 15, 1999)

Figure 1.0 – Nominal Roll of Native Girls attending the Spanish Residential School

SPANISH INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL – GIRLS

NAME	AGENCY	AGE	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	TONSILS	VISION	TEETH (FILLINGS)	VACC.	REM
	Golden Lake	16	118½	60½			2		Goit
	North Bay	14	125	63			4		
	Manitowaning	14	114	63			2		Goit
	Caughnawaga	16	126	62	OUT	DEF			Goitr
	Sturgeon Falls	13	109	60	OUT				Goitr
	Soo	15	146	65			4		
	Thessalon	14	134	61½	OUT	DEF	1		Goiti
	Manitowaning	15	130	62½	OUT		1		Goit
	Golden Lake	16	128	62					
	Manitowaning	15	104	62	OUT	DEF	1		Goitr
	Rama	14	95	61	OUT		1		
	Manitowaning	12	88	58	OUT				
	Caughnawaga	13	110	59	OUT		1		
	Manitoulin	13	92	62	OUT		1	No	
	Manitowaning	15	102	61					Goitr
	Manitowaning	15	120	62	OUT				Goitr
	Caughnawaga	14	101	64	OUT			No	
	Manitowaning	13	97	61	OUT		4		
	St. Regis	15	107	62½	OUT	DEF		No	Goiti
	Manitowaning	14	98	62	OUT	DEF			Goitr
	Manitowaning	15	108	60½		DEF			
	Manitowaning	14	106	61	OUT	DEF	1		
	North Bay	14	105	61½					
	Gore Bay	14	105	59½					Goiti
	Caughnawaga	13	104	59½			1		Goiti
	Thessalon	13	106	63	OUT	DEF			
	North Bay	12	73	62	OUT		1		
	Manitowaning	13	108	60			1		Goit
	St. Regis	13	101	58	EN		2	No	
	Caughnawaga	12	94	58		DEF			
	Thessalon	11	85	58			3		

Note. The names of the girls and the year of this nominal roll have been omitted for obvio reasons. Many of the names listed came from my community and surrounding First Nations. The significance of this nominal role shows the categorization of our children tha attended these schools. It demonstrates the dehumanizing treatment of our people. (RG 10 Volume 6219. File 471-13 Part 2)

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The interesting aspect of his comments also demonstrates the construction of relations between Natives and non-natives. Both were positioned, historically, socially and forcibly in a situation that was inequitable. Natives were regarded as inferior and non-natives superior. Natives were subjected to a form of apartheid that mirrors the South African situation. Socialization of Native people was constantly under attack and attempts to mould them was conducted by external bodies and agents. Resistance had its consequences (illegal to practice culture). This is not to suggest that the people of Sagamok did not resist. They had continually sought to be self-determining and were social actors that responded and acted independently within a structurally hostile situation.[3]

The experiences of Sagamok First Nation members in public and separate schools reveal interesting elements of the greater Native education narrative. During the 1950s many of our members were bussed out of the community to attend schools in the neighbouring towns. The schools benefited by receiving the typical tuition rates but were also rewarded with capital dollars to build new gyms or parking lots. This was the arrangement for schools that took in Native students. Many of the local schools where members of Sagamok First Nation attended reflect these arrangements. The people of the community that were bussed out were often subjected to the racist and disrespectful behaviour of students and teachers alike. The stories of the people of Sagamok tell the tale of an educational system that blanketed their intentions behind words like integration and assimilation, but the reality of experiences reveals a darker scenario. Upon much discussion with differing members of the community, they tell a similar tale, faced with a system that was never intended to reflect and affirm Native culture and identity, many failed and fell to wayside. The human costs of this type of schooling is reflected in our high drop out rates, low retention and graduation rates. The Natives of Sagamok have paid a large price for an externally imposed education.

Why tell only the grim story? Where is the balance? A critical reader of this work will assume that this is a biased and one sided account of education. This may be so, but the necessity of telling this part of the story is crucial to understanding the contemporary context of education in Sagamok First Nation. The discomfort with schooling, the dislocation from education and lack of trust with the system has historical roots that cannot be separated from today's reality. The history of education for the people of Sagamok First Nation has only been about the affirmation of the formal (external to community) and a rejection of the informal (internal to the community). One would think that local control of Native education would result in a less problematic approach to schools, but the search for meaning and the struggle to determine what constitutes an Anishinabek school in the face of a colonial history continues to be the greatest struggle of all.

Current Educational Reality in Sagamok First Nation

> If we wish our history to be retained the children are the best to hold these important values.
> - Education Committee Member, Sagamok First Nation

What is the purpose of this research? Who are the participants? What value will the findings have for the stakeholders? The purpose of this research was to explore the tensions underlying an educational decision in a First Nations community. More specifically, to survey the complexity of philosophies, values and concepts deliberated by a group of decision makers concerning the formal and the informal. In this case the site chosen was the community of Sagamok First Nation. The issue is the Native culture and language content in their band controlled school (presence of the informal). The decision makers that affect this issue are the teachers, the parent school committee and the education committee. The teachers are one of the populations that are a part of this research. This is for the most obvious reason that they ultimately affect the daily reality of what goes on in the classroom. A teacher is not a neutral person and their position and comfort with Native language/culture will be reflected in the child's curricular experience. It is as Stairs (1995) reports,

> Teachers bring with them not only their fund of knowledge but also their culturally patterned ways of organizing and passing on that knowledge. Even more fundamentally, they bring the value systems of their communities concerning what is important to learn and how most appropriately to learn it. (p. 146)

Therefore the participation of the community's formally recognized educators was vital to this research.[4]

The parent school committee has an official mandate in the community to be the voice for those parents and guardians in Sagamok First Nation. This committee deals with what is valued and important in a community-based school. The range of issues can vary from fund raising, hot lunches, school trips, safety & discipline (safe schools), problems (hypothetical cases are discussed), curriculum content and many more critical subjects. The purpose of this committee is to link the parents with the school and to provide a forum for their voices to be heard. The parent school committee has a direct link to the official decision making body of the Sagamok Anishnawbek Education Committee. The parent school committee forwards minutes of their meetings to them with their concerns. The issues brought forward by the parents are dealt with in a most serious manner. The education committee is the official decision making body with powers that are intertwined with the elected body of the Chief and Council. The education committee has an official mandate with terms of reference, which clearly define their roles and responsibilities. In essence, the teaching staff is directly accountable to the education committee, as they are technically their employer. The education committee representation is made up of volunteers who have a vested interest in education. The membership also includes an elected Councillor that holds the education portfolio for the community. Also sitting in an ex-officio capacity is the Education Director and her staff. Any major decisions regarding all levels of education in Sagamok First Nation must pass through the education committee. It is important to note that the voice of the parent school committee is heard and valued at this level.

The benefits of this research are that the findings will articulate the views and visions of these decision makers regarding a most serious issue. The role of Native culture and language in the school has been a most contentious and widely debated topic. One of the areas of concern that has arisen over the years has been the definition of culture itself. How is culture packaged and presented? With the introduction of formal religion into the community we have seen a great division amongst the general populace regarding Native culture. Since the doctrine of most churches historically positioned the 'Native way of life' as heathen and hell bound; many of our people still view the 'Native way' as such. When culture is packaged as the celebration of the Creator/earth through the use of sweatlodges, drums, regalia, dancing and ceremonies; it is rejected by most extreme religions in the community. When culture is packaged in a less authentic manner, we see an acceptance of it by various members from differing religions. The issue comes down to the fundamental fact that the Anishinabek way is a spiritual way. This is a way of life that cannot be separated from the sacred. The secular and sacred are one. When cultural activities are run at the school we often note that various parents will have their children pulled from the school for that day. Also, when teachers try to incorporate Native culture or history in the mainstream curriculum we hear the same complaints. Children who live in this First Nation community are taken from the class when Native culture is present. This is reminiscent of a living oxymoron where teachers are entrusted with the education of children, entrusted with supporting their self-worth/identity, providing them with an environment that is meaningful and relevant and yet these teachers are limited and denied. Teach the kids but do not teach them about themselves. This certainly leaves the teachers in a most compromising situation.

The next few sections deal specifically with the decision makers' responses to the issues surrounding the inclusion and depth of Native culture and language in the school.

Role of Native Culture, History and Traditions

> We are the Anishinabek, they [the children] need to know who they are. – Education Committee Member, Sagamok First Nation

The role of Native culture, history and traditions is perceived as key to the identity and self worth of the children of Sagamok Anishnawbek (Parent, Sagamok First Nation). The relaying of how the Anishinabek came to be, who they are and the legacy into which the children are born is of great importance. From the available data of Figure 2.0 we see that all decision makers agree that the culture and history needs to be included in the school curriculum. The only point of departure for these decision makers is the percentage of inclusion throughout the curriculum. In terms of the overall importance of

the history and culture to the school curriculum the majority agreed with the exception of one teacher. An interesting aspect of the data is reflected in the responses of the education committee members who place a deeper and wider emphasis on culture and history inclusion. This could be explained by the committee representation themselves who are all respected and known for their demonstration of pride in the Anishinabek Nation (oral historians, fluent speakers, youth committed to education/culture, traditionalists).

Figure 2.0 – Comparative Analysis of Responses to Culture

Area	Parents	Teachers	Education Committee
Native culture, history, language inclusion	• Yes • Yes • Yes – culture, history and traditions are vital to the very existence of a group of people such as the Anishinabek nation. • Yes	• Yes – On a very sporadic level, because of our previous lack of resources, it was difficult to plan lessons. • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes – Medicine Wheel Teachings, teachings of the Seven Grandfathers • Yes • Yes • No • Yes	• Yes • Yes – before they leave for high school • Yes – to some degree • Yes – Young people in our community should know more about where they came from • Yes – present issues affecting us • Yes – we are the Anishinabek, they need to know who they are. • Yes – if we wish our history to be retained the children are the best to hold these important values.
			• * • 21 – 30% - in several

% of inclusion	• Uncertain about amount of content, certain about its importance in relation to building, maintaining the identity of child, increase self esteem, increase self confidence • 31 – 40% • 21 – 30% • 21 – 30%	• 11 – 20% - same as above • 31 – 40% • 11 – 20% • 1 – 10% • 11 – 20% • 11 – 20% - I usually try to implement at least 2 units in my program • 51 – 60% • more than 81% • * • 41 – 50%	classes (geography, history, English, the arts), bring out relative reasoning to what they are learning in the same view of English language. • 31 – 40% - culture, history and traditions are an important aspect, however they should not overpower regular class learning • 21 – 30% • 51 – 60% • more than 81% - use nature and what Mother Earth supplies to us as teaching tool • 51 – 60% - Certain phases in student's activities can greatly benefit them if carefully implemented – equal exposure with both worlds will bring balance to the student.
Overall importance	• Yes • Yes • Yes – It furthers their knowledge and understanding of who they are as First Nation People. • Yes	• Yes • Yes, especially in the non-rotary grades (primary/junior) • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • No • Yes	• Overall • Yes, if it can't be taught at home it should be taught at school • Yes – combined • Yes • Yes – instils pride • Yes – We are the Anishnawbek • Yes

Upon many informal discussions with the various participants it is clear that the vision of the community based decision makers emphasize the critical role of Native culture, history and traditions. Many speak to the inclusion of our traditional activities by utilizing the appropriate knowledge holders and specialists. For example, in previous discussions with some education committee members there was support to have 'ourstory' more reflected at the school. This meaning that areas like our traditional clan systems, rites of passage for girls/boys, seasonal activities, medicines and other concepts within the cultural domain be explored. With informal discussions with various parents there was also an emphasis on the inclusion of the history of our people, as well as utilizing our natural environment for classroom relevancy for the children. One of the ideas suggested by the parents was to have the grandmothers and

aunties of the community more welcomed in the school environment. The idea of a 'grandmothers chair' in the primary grades was presented. This meaning that whenever our children needed that good nurturing there would be a warm and respected figure available at all times. The parents emphasized the drawing upon the community membership for support and resources. The teachers also felt that the inclusion of Native culture and history was critical, but with many discussions they felt the real challenge was human resources, physical resources and planning. In response to this concern a list of people in the community who had specialized cultural expertise was drafted, as well as a list of the historical and sacred locations in the community. The next challenge is for the teaching staff to plan these activities accordingly.

Role of Native Language

> Without [our] language we are a dying Nation. – Parent, Sagamok First Nation

The importance of language in the transmission of culture is critical indeed. To be able to speak an indigenous language is to have a glimpse into the thoughtworld of our ancestors (Wright, 1988). It is to understand the world in the same spirit of those many generations that came before us. The reality is that the rate of transference of indigenous languages is slower than the growing attrition rates of fluent speakers. The generation gaps between fluent speakers is growing. An example of this is in the community of Sagamok Anishnawbek where you have the 50+ population that are fluent in Anishnaabemowin (speaking the Native language). The next generation below that group (35 to 49) reflect a majority that can understand the language but cannot fully speak it. The next generation below that (20 – 34) know the basic common courtesies and then their understanding ends there. Of course there are exceptions to this when the homes first language is Ojibwe, but in most cases this is not the scenario. The pattern is obvious, as each generation grows we see a dissolution of the language. The solution is more than obvious, that the school and homes need to place a greater emphasis on Anishnaabemowin.

In Figure 3.0 we are presented with a comparison of responses in regard to the issue of Native language inclusion and importance in the school. The most interesting aspect of this data is the vision of language as compared to the reality. The members of the education committee and the parent/school committee emphasize the crucial importance of language in the classroom. They even go so far as to allot ¼ to ½ of the school day in Native language

Figure 3.0 – Comparative Analysis of Responses to Language

Area	Parents	Teachers	Education Committee
	• Yes		• Yes

Native language	• Yes • Yes – native language should be taught for children and parents so that the language can be retained and reinforced within the home and the community • Yes	• Yes – not fluently • Yes • No • Yes • Yes • Yes – sometimes when I discipline student I speak native language • Yes • Yes • Yes (during native language classes • Yes	• yes/no (because it confuses their learning identity), both because aboriginal we should be proud of our language. • Yes • Yes – It would be very good for the young people to keep our language going. A lot of older people don't speak or understand it. • Yes – repetition and consistency • Yes – at levels they understand • Yes – Exposure to the language on a daily basis reinforces the learner's retentions of certain words/phrases.
% of inclusion	• 41 – 50% - full immersion in primary grades to four, ½ time for upper grades • 21 – 30% • 21 – 30% • *	• 11 – 20% - I try to use it as much as I can conversationally • 11 – 20% • * • 1 – 10% • 11 – 20% • 1 – 10% • 31 – 40% • more than 81% • 1 – 10% • 41 – 50%	• more than 81% for grade 4 and down, 41 – 50% for grades 5 to 8 • 21 – 30% • 51 – 60% - children should be taught Ojibway in many of these classes • 21 – 30% • 21 – 30% • more than 81% - as much as possible and the capability of teacher • 51 – 60%
			• No

Personal fluency	• No – understand, don't speak although it was my first language (fluent until the age of three) • Somewhat • No – I do however understand the language and can speak very minimal • No	• No • No • No • Yes • Yes • Yes • No – I am not fluent in the language but I do have an understanding of discussions and words • Yes • No – but know some words with some understanding of oral communication • Yes	• No • No • No – I went to school off reserve and the two languages were French and English. I never got to learn our language in school like our kids are being taught. They should consider themselves lucky. • Yes – kids need to hear it over and over again because it's easier to hear orally. • Yes – modern Anishnawbe language but not the language of the 1700/1800 Anishnawbe • Yes
Overall importance	• Yes • Yes • Yes – Without language we are a dying Nation • Yes	• Yes, staff should be encouraged to use it more • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes	• Yes – in the younger grades, they catch on better • Yes – to our identity • Yes • Yes – the more the students hear it the better they will understand and speak it. • Yes – consistency • Yes – We need to know that we are the Anishnawbek as a first language. • Yes

Note: * means not applicable or did not answer. Applies to all figures.

immersion. The teachers agree that the language is important, but the use of language in a realistic sense is reflected in 5 to 10% of the day. The majority of language is taught in the Native language classes where the daily exposure is from 25 minutes
to 45 minutes a day per class. At this rate the transference of language in this school is fighting an uphill battle.

Role of Community Elders

> Elders are the utmost important persons of a community, An Elder informs us of structure, rules & laws and ways of living in regards to family and community systems. – Parent, Sagamok First Nation

The Elders of this community are regarded as those knowledge holders that are integral to cultural and spiritual survival. Each time an Elder passes on so does an entire library of Anishinabek cosmology and language. The Elders are the key to the past and to our full understanding of self as Anishinabek peoples. The importance of Elder knowledge and Elder language is critical to the integrity of learning in our First Nations schools. The Elders pass on the values, customs, concepts and ways of living that are

central to the Anishinabek Nation. To be removed from our Elders and the language in which the Creator gave us will position our children in this way,

> [They] no longer [will] think or feel Indian. And although they may wear Indian jewellery and take part in pow-wows, they can never capture that…reverence for the sun and the moon…no longer are the wolf, the bear and the caribou elder brothers but beasts, resources to be killed and sold. They will have lost their identity which no amount of reading can restore. (Johnston, p. 10, 1991)

The poignancy of these words as told by Basil Johnston, a respected Anishinabek historian, resonate with a truth that is reflected in our treatment of the earth and her children. The importance of Elders in the education of our children cannot be undermined in both its value and survival of a Nation.

In Figure 4.0 the data reflects that the parents and the education committee place a large emphasis of importance on Elders inclusion to the school. The teaching staff however report a very different scenario, although the majority feel that Elders are important they rarely draw upon them as key resources in the education of Sagamok First Nation children. From my informal discussions with the teachers the reasoning behind this lack of Elder presence is time and planning constraints. Many teachers would love to have the Elders in the classroom but are unsure of how to go about this (procedures & protocol). Teachers are faced with enormous pressures of meeting an external curricular agenda and have had to sacrifice the internal one (informal learning).

Figure 4.0 – Comparative Analysis of Responses to Elders

Area	Parents	Teachers	Education Committee
Elders importance	• Yes • Yes • Yes – Elders are the utmost important persons of a community, An Elder informs us of structure, rules & laws and ways of living in regards to family and community systems. • Yes	• No • Yes • No • Yes • Yes • Yes – to complete my unit on Halloween I invite an Elder to talk to the students about the ceremonies practiced. • Yes – we do get invited to visit with Elders outside of the school • No • No • Yes	• Yes, but hasn't been done yet • Yes, if they are interested • Yes • Yes – Our Elders have so much to offer both historically and culturally, along with language, a lot of first hand experience. • Yes – if they want to and as long as its relevant • Yes – children learn from Elders and Elders learn from children. Make a better community. • Yes – Ample time should be allowed for Elders participation.
# of times	• More than 15 times – grandmothers rocking chair idea, grandparent could be utilized in response to the emotional needs of the children • 1 – 5 • 1 – 5 – most consider and respect the agenda	• * • 1 – 5 • * • 1 - 5 • 1 – 5 • 1 – 5 • 1 – 5 • Time constraints affect planning *	• * • 11 – 15, at least 2 times a month • 1 – 5 – our Elders are valuable resources • 6 – 10 • 1 – 5 • more than 15 times – as much as possible and in their direct knowledge.

	and respect the agenda of the Elder • 11 - 15	• * • Most times its hard to get them to come in	knowledge. • more than 15 times – Children will be accustomed to being with the Elder – hearing the language will assist the student to learn language and history.
Overall inclusion	• Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes	• Yes, with the development of curriculum. I think there will be more opportunity for this. • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • No • Yes	• * • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes – as long as its relevant to course content • Yes – Children need to know who to turn to if they need help • Yes

Note: * means not applicable or did not answer. Applies to all figures.

Role of Community Resource People

> This [inclusion of resource people] provides for a change of atmosphere for the students and students receive different points of view. – Education Committee member, Sagamok First Nation

Community Resource People are defined as all those community members (other than Elders) that possess specialized knowledge, talents, skills and abilities. This definition includes employees of the First Nation, service providers, various professionals, elected bodies, politicians, traditional resource people (quill boxes, woodwork, beading, baskets, leatherwork, etc), environmentalists, foresters, fisherman, historians and many others that have experiences that contribute to an Anishinabek way of life. Resource people are a critical and valuable tool that can be drawn upon to reinforce or introduce new concepts and learning. In Figure 5.0 we see that all parties are in agreement that community resource people are important to the educational environment of the children. The disparity once again lies between that vision and the reality. The vision includes a drawing upon of all resource people to support the education program at the school. The reality is that resource people are not called upon very often. The reason for this misfortune is time, planning and protocol. Teachers are under constant pressure to justify their class time with external codes and expectations, which poses some greater problems and challenges for the justification of informal modes of learning.

Figure 5.0 – Comparative Analysis of Responses to Resource People

Area	Parents	Teachers	Education Committee
			• Yes

Resource people importance	• Yes • Yes • Yes – Resource people introduce new ideas and concepts and the reality of the world and what children may expect when entering a world beyond the First Nation or within the First Nation and the many challenges. • Yes	• No • Yes • No • Yes • Yes • Yes – heath unit, I invite a person (farmer) who runs a dairy farm to talk to the children about where milk comes from, then we visit a farm • No • No – resource people get invited but not to mine, whole school events or certain grades • No • Yes	• Yes – every person you meet is a resource person, every day people, members, residents have much to offer • Yes – Our community speakers or facilitators will positively impact their learning and will reduce costs of other facilitators • Yes – They could let the students know what kind of services are available in our community, that if they should need help or someone to talk to they'll know where to go. • Yes • Yes – this provides for a change of atmosphere for the students and students receive different points of view. • Yes
# of times	• As required • 1 – 5 • 6 – 10 – once again, must consider the availability and knowledge of the community resource people • 6 - 10 • 1 – 5	• * • 1 – 5 • * • 1 - 5 • 1 – 5 • 1 – 5 • * • * • * • 1 – 5	• more than 15 people – using 15+ is a way of saying we need to teach the arts and crafts, stories (drama), regalia making to our kids • 11 – 15, the same, 2 times a month • 1 – 5 • 6 – 10 • 1 – 5, usually one or two? more than 15 people – as many as possible without replacing the teacher. Teacher needs to teach with the resource person. • 1 – 5, Selected resource people should be slotted on a regular basis.

Overall inclusion	• Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes	• Yes, with the development of curriculum. I think there will be more opportunity for this. • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • No • Yes	• * • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes – as long as its relevant to course content • Yes – Children need to know who to turn to if they need help • Yes

Parents and education committee members outline the benefits of having resource people in the classroom. In fact most of these research participants are those very people that need to be drawn upon to reinforce learning. They possess an abundance of knowledge and expertise that is unique and original. One of our parents sums up the value of utilizing community resource people when they state,

> Resource people introduce new ideas and concepts and the reality of the world and what children may expect when entering a world beyond the First Nation or within the First Nation and the many challenges. – Parent, Sagamok First Nation

One of the main challenges for the school then is to incorporate those human resources that are recognized experts in the community. These individuals represent that informal aspect of knowledge and learning that is rarely recognized within the formal structures of schooling. All participants firmly agree with the value of community resource people in the school, now the challenge is to make this a reality.[5]

Role of Sacred and Significant Places

> Many children do not even recognize the importance of our own land and the development of how we come to be a community. – Parent, Sagamok First Nation

The inclusion of historical landmarks, sacred locations and significant points within the school curriculum is vital to the children's sense of belonging to the land. In Figure 6.0 we are reminded of the importance of schooling reflecting the living culture of a community. The Anishinabek are a living culture and the knowledge of the people is based in that land and their experiences within it. The oral traditions come from those memories that are interlocked with the place itself. The data reveals that all parties are in agreement over the importance of planning the inclusion of land into the curriculum at the school. Each group of research participants identified places that are central to the Anishinabek children's overall learning experience. But, the data also reveals that the activities based on the land are few and far between. The key issues are safety, adequate supervision and planning for the teaching staff and their classes.

Figure 6.0 – Comparative Analysis of Responses to Sacred and Significant Places

Area	Parents	Teachers	Education Committee

Historical locations importance	• Yes • Yes • Many children do not even recognize the importance of our own land and the development of how we come to be a community. • Yes	• Yes – when done as a school project i.e. All Soul's Day • Yes • No • Yes • No • Yes • No • No – resources (bus, parents), lack of time to plan • No • No – I would like to take the children, however time and safety is a concern	• Yes – with Elders/Resource People to tell the legends and/or stories about these places. It would be great for the kids to know. • Yes – history = identity • Yes • Yes – they could learn more about our home with hands on experience. • Yes – if relevant to course content or history • Yes – The children need to know Sagamok and surrounding communities and the people. • Yes
Locations	• Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – contributes to identity, self esteem and self confidence • Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sugar Bushes • Indian Head, Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, a trip of the entire community • Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – there is something to learn about each place	• Cemetery • Sugar Bushes • * • Indian Head, Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, Sugar Bushes • * • Sugar Bushes • * • * • Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, Sugar Bushes	• Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes • Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes, Little Detroit, Shoepack Bay, Boat tour of Sagamok Waters • Spanish River, Sagamok Point, Fort Lacloche – these provide students with important historical info while the others hold cultural significance • Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes • Spanish River, Indian Head, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes • Spanish River, Indian Head, Spirit (replace Devil's) Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – all listed, each grade can visit each area at certain grades.

			certain grades. • Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – visiting these sites will reinforce the students retention of history within the community.
Overall inclusion	• Yes • Yes • Yes – I feel that these historical locations should be included with the culture, history and tradition portion of the curriculum. • Yes	• Yes, students must become more aware of their community in order to instil pride and self-esteem. • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes, if we are to include into particular lessons • Yes	• Yes • Yes, personal growth and development should be incorporated • Yes • Yes • Yes – I believe our children need to learn their history • Yes – Children must know the Anishnawbe trail. • Yes

Some of the most interesting responses to the inclusion of land has come from the education committee membership. They have identified issues like personal growth, development, identity, hands-on learning, relevancy and the joining of these potential land activities with the Elders and/or community resource people. These members have espoused a significant teaching about the land that is central to the Anishinabek,

> An…Elder has said, the farther we get from nature the harder our hearts become. The harder our hearts become the more it will be necessary, as we live with others (all our relations), for some external authority to direct and restrain us. But if we can recover the traditional world view and remember the sacred hoop of life, we will have little need for someone to impose laws upon us. Then we will be truly free. (Newbery, 1982, p. 28)

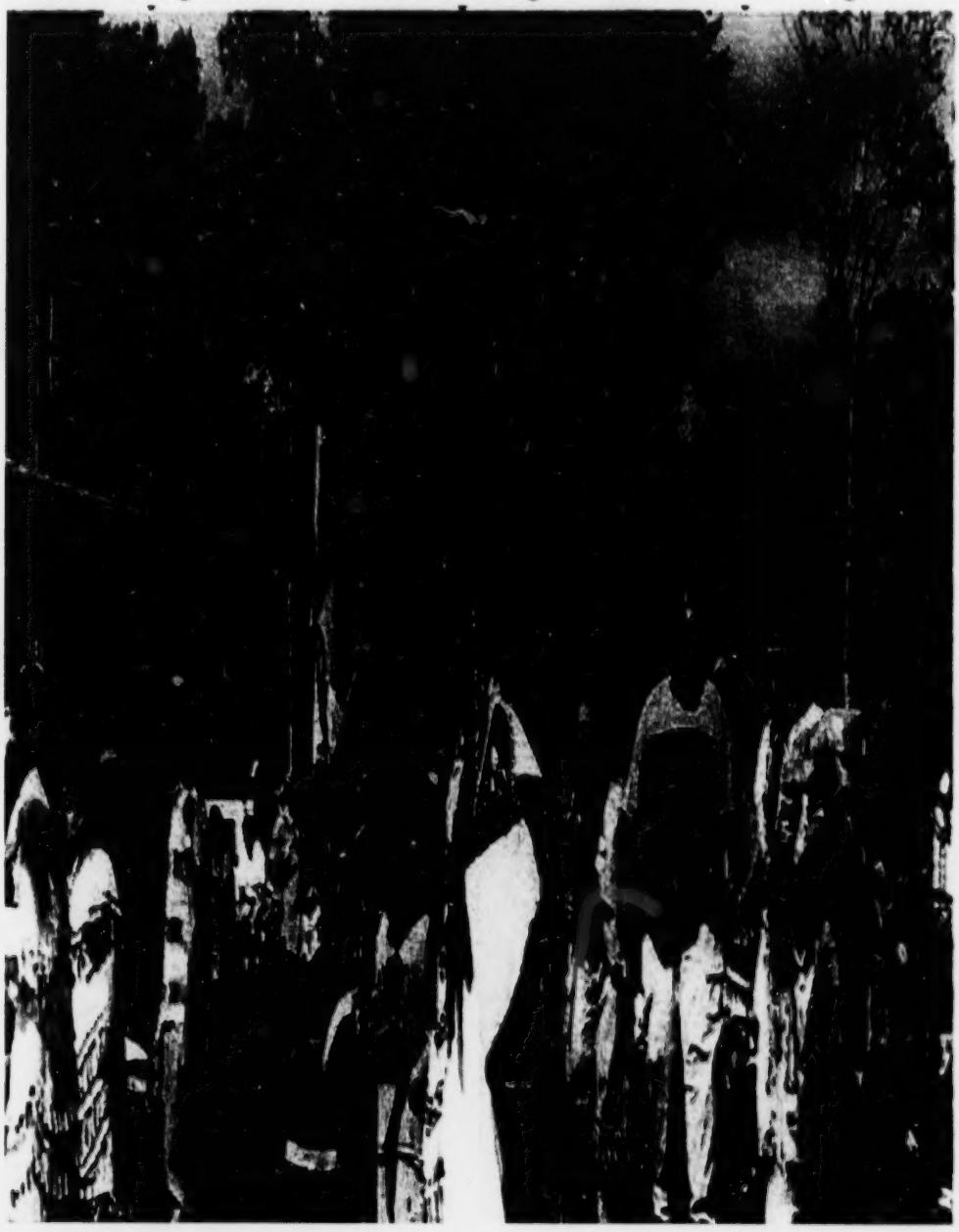
The connection between the relationship of land and an Anishinabek way of life is great. The moral codes, norms, mores and values are rooted in a form of natural law that is reinforced by the membership of the community. An education that is exempt of earth and Elder experiences is exempt of an important part of living in a respectful manner.

Role of Sacred and Significant Events

The following photos (Figure 7.0) depict significant and sacred events that are central to an Anishinabek way of life in the community of Sagamok First Nation. Upon many informal discussions with the various research participants, the role of including these events as part of the curriculum becomes a key and vital tool in cultural restoration. These photos depict only a few of the many learning opportunities in this community for its First Nations school. The role of significant events in Native culture cannot be separated from place, language and people. The impact that the inclusion of significant events would have on the lived reality of the school children would be enormous: supporting their self worth as Anishinabek peoples, fulfilling a holistic approach to a more inclusive education and encouraging the expression of an authentic Native voice.

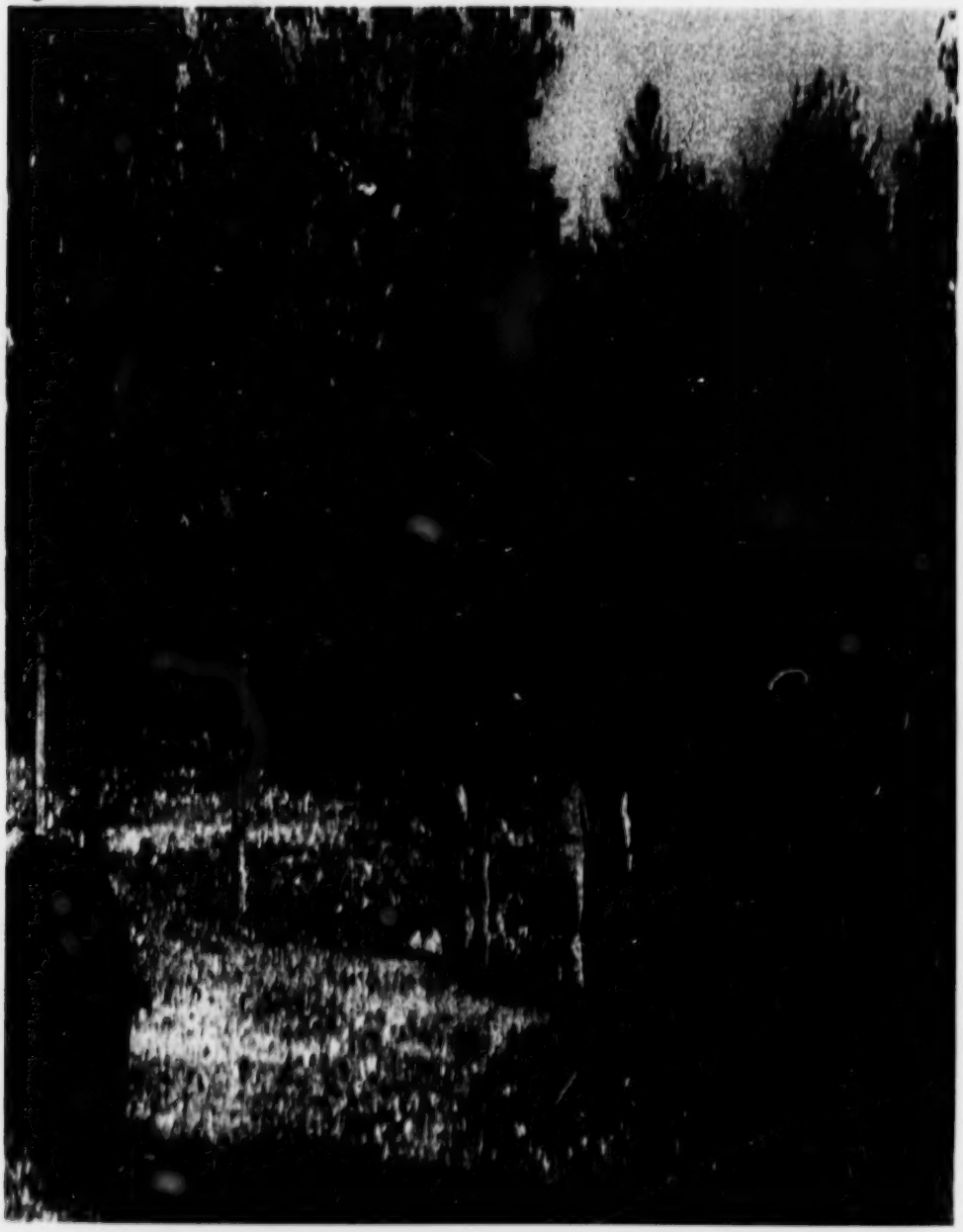
Figure 7.0 – Photographs of Significant and Sacred Events

Photo of the Sagamok Anishnawbek Honouring Our Water Powwow during the Summer of 1999.



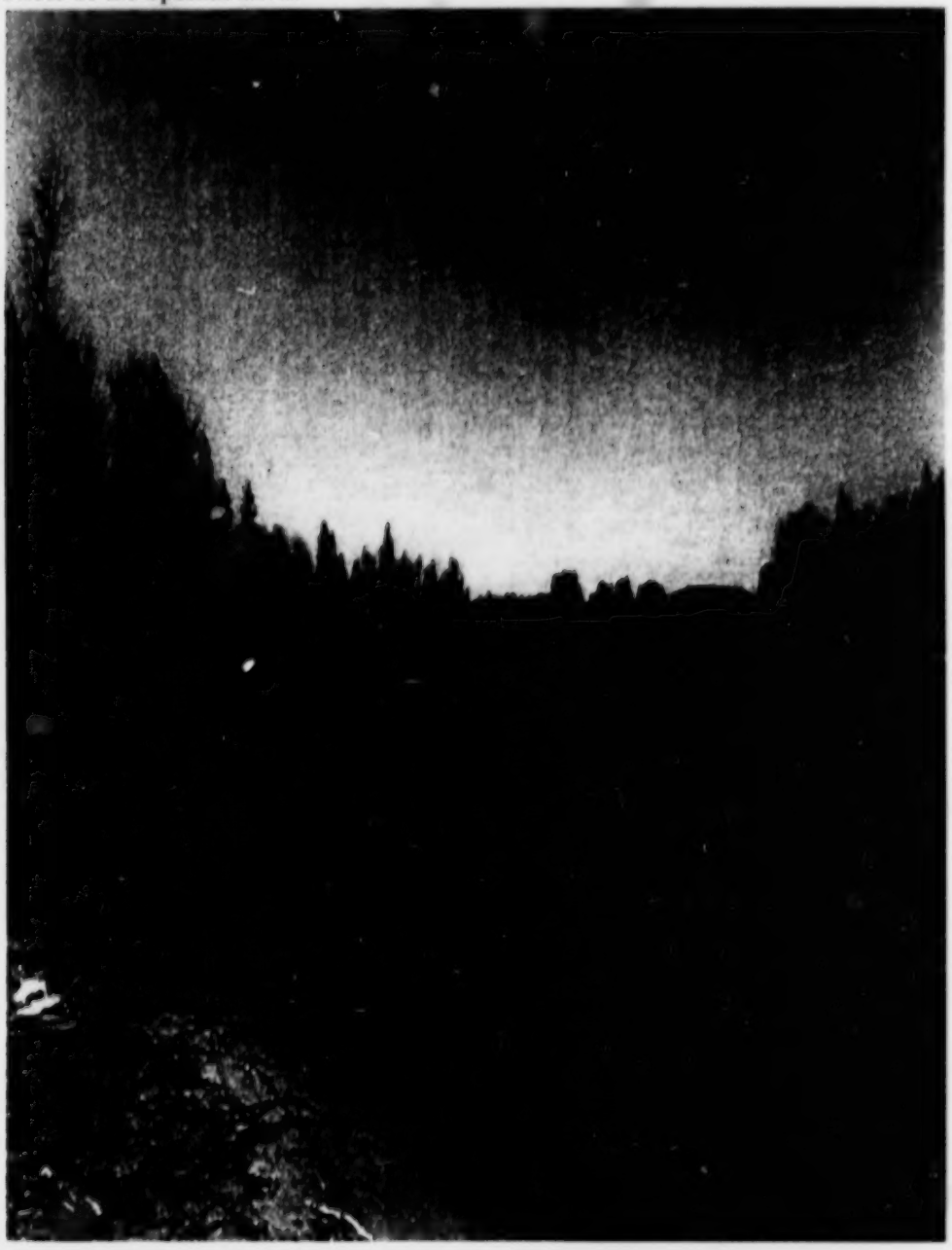
This powwow was a celebration of our water. This is quite significant considering the recent teachings of the Anishinabe that tell us we are headed for a seven (7) year water crisis. The crisis is the result of our mistreatment and disrespect of Mother Earth.

Photo of Nookmis Madonna Toulouse and Elder Martin Assinewe at his garden in the community of Sagamok Anishnawbek



The seasons represent a core element in the traditional worldview of the Ojibwe people. Our daily lives were dependent upon the cycles and teachings of the seasons. This garden is in the season of fall and the contents will become part of our Tasehwung tables.

Photo of the Spanish River



The Spanish River is the living location where the ancestors of Sagamok would travel to and from their winter camps in Biscotasing. The Spanish River is also the location where the forestry industry poisoned the river.

Photo of our Robinson-Huron Treaty Day Celebrations

This event is a forum in which the history of the treaty, the creation of Sagamok, the annuity system and Native rights can be discussed and articulated.

The current reality at the school reflects a minimal inclusion of significant and sacred events as celebrated and recognized by the community. The few that are celebrated and incorporated into the curriculum are Tasehwung (feast of the dead), the Robinson Huron Treaty Day and Education Week activities (drum socials). Although these are important events we are still a long way from incorporating the informal with the formal; balancing the internal culture of the community with an external reference point of expectations. Once again these discussions bring me back to the purpose of a community-based education in Sagamok First Nation which is based on this principal,

> Children must know the Anishnawbe Trail. – Education Committee Member, Sagamok First Nation

This meaning that the key to a community that is recovering from the difficulties of a colonial past will be found in the re-educating of it's future generations. Anishinabek children need to know the past to be better prepared for the uncertainties of tomorrow. A healthy individual evolves from healthy communities and as Sagamok First Nation faces these challenges, we see that hope as they become the true inheritors of self determination in education.

Conclusion

In summary, the preceding article has presented the complexity of an educational decision being deliberated in a First Nations community by a group of decision makers. We reflect on the historical positioning of the community of Sagamok Anishnawbek in relation to educational institutions and their history. We also take the time to examine those issues, ideas, concepts and underlying worldview that have become the sounding board for this discussion on the informal and the formal. The tension points for this Native education narrative have revolved around broader themes of culture, history and language, but also dealt with the specifics of role of Elders, role of resource people, role of sacred places and role of significant events. This article has provided the reader with insight into the intricacy and depth of the on-going challenges of self-determination in education.

Endnotes

1. These terms come from a branch of philosophy. Epistemology meaning the construction of knowledge and what counts as knowledge. Axiology meaning values and the study of those values.

Ontology meaning the exploration of 'why we are here'.

2. Primordial event is a term that is used in the social services field to describe an experience that has eternal and long range consequences. It refers to a change in life that can never be altered and will have residual effects for all time. Affecting generations that did not have first hand contact.

3. Residents of this community expressed forms of agency. Even though the people of Sagamok were continually battered with the forces of oppression, there are many oral stories and archival documents to support their resistance. Many banded together to confront government agents, Game Wardens, police, priests, school inspectors and other agents that sought to keep them down.

4. Formally recognized in the sense that these teachers have been certified through an external body. There are educators in this community that have not been trained at a Teacher's College or an academic institution. These individuals represent the value of the informal; where knowledge and life are not separated. Examples are Elders and medicine people.

5. There has been developed as part of a curriculum project with the school, a community human resource list that provides the names and contributions of those members. This list has already been given to all the teaching staff as part of this project.

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Appendices

Table 1 – Parent Committee Responses to Survey Regarding Native Culture and Language in School Curriculum

Should the native culture, history and traditions be included in your child's classroom content?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – culture, history and traditions are vital to the very existence of a group of people such as the Anishinabek nation. 4. Yes
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. Uncertain about amount of content, certain about its importance in relation to building, maintaining the identity of child, increase self esteem, increase self confidence 2. 31 – 40% 3. 21 – 30% 4. 21 – 30%
Should the native language be included in your child's classroom content?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – native language should be taught for children and parents so that the language can be retained and reinforced within the home and the community 4. Yes
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. 41 – 50% - full immersion in primary grades to four, ½ time for upper grades 2. 21 – 30% 3. 21 – 30% 4. *
Are you fluent in the native language?	1. No – understand, don't speak although it was my first language (fluent until the age of three) 2. Somewhat 3. No – I do however understand the language and can speak very minimal 4. No
Should community Elders be invited and present in your child's classroom?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – Elders are the utmost important persons of a community, An Elder informs us of structure, rules & laws and ways of living in regards to family and community systems. 4. Yes
If yes, how many times a year (provided general numeric categories).	1. More than 15 times – grandmothers rocking chair idea, grandparent could be utilized in response to the emotional needs of the children 2. 1 – 5 3. 1 – 5 – most consider and respect the agenda of the Elder 4. 11 - 15
Should community resource people be invited to be guest speakers or facilitators in your child's classroom?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – Resource people introduce new ideas and concepts and the reality of the world and what children may expect when entering a world beyond the First Nation or within the First Nation and the many challenges. 4. Yes

If yes, how many resource people (provided general numeric categories).	1. As required 2. 1 – 5 3. 6 – 10 – once again, must consider the availability and knowledge of the community resource people 4. 6 - 10
Should fieldtrips to the many historical locations in Sagamok First Nation be part of your child's classroom content?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Many children do not even recognize the importance of our own land and the development of how we come to be a community. 4. Yes
If yes, which ones?	1. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – contributes to identity, self esteem and self confidence 2. Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sugar Bushes 3. Indian Head, Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, a trip of the entire community 4. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche, Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – there is something to learn about each place
Do you think that the native culture, history and traditions are important to the overall classroom content of your child?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – It furthers their knowledge and understanding of who they are as First Nation People. 4. Yes
Do you think that the native language is important to the overall classroom content of your child?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – Without language we are a dying Nation 4. Yes
Do you think that the use of local Elders and resource people is important to the overall classroom content of your child?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes
Do you think that the inclusion of local historical locations is important to the overall classroom content of your child?	1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes – I feel that these historical locations should be included with the culture, history and tradition portion of the curriculum. 4. Yes
Questions, comments & thoughts	1. * 2. * 3. I highly recommend that this information be given to the students of Beedaban either in the form of a text combined with practical onsite visitation. 4. *

Note: * indicates that there is no comment or that this is not applicable.

Table 2 – Teacher Responses to Survey Regarding Native Culture and Language in School Curriculum

Questions	Responses
Should the native culture, history and traditions be included in your classroom content?	1. Yes – On a very sporadic level, because of our previous lack of resources, it was difficult to plan lessons. 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes – Medicine Wheel Teachings, teachings of the Seven Grandfathers 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. No 10. Yes
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. 11 – 20% - same as above 2. 31 – 40% 3. 11 – 20% 4. 1 – 10% 5. 11 – 20% 6. 11 – 20% - I usually try to implement at least 2 units in my program 7. 51 – 60% 8. more than 81% 9. * 10. 41 – 50%
Is the native language included in your classroom content?	1. Yes – not fluently 2. Yes 3. No 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes – sometimes when I discipline student I speak native language 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. Yes (during native language classes) 10. Yes
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. 11 – 20% - I try to use it as much as I can conversationally. 2. 11 – 20% 3. * 4. 1 – 10% 5. 11 – 20% 6. 1 – 10% 7. 31 – 40% 8. more than 81% 9. 1 – 10% 10. 41 – 50%
	1. No 2. No 3. No 4. Yes 5. Yes

Are you fluent in the native language?	6. Yes 7. No – I am not fluent in the language but I do have an understanding of discussions and words 8. Yes 9. No – but know some words with some understanding of oral communication 10. Yes
Are community Elders invited and present in your classroom?	1. No 2. Yes 3. No 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes – to complete my unit on Halloween I invite an Elder to talk to the students about the ceremonies practiced. 7. Yes – we do get invited to visit with Elders outside of the school 8. No 9. No 10. Yes
If yes, how many times a year (provided general numeric categories).	1. * 2. 1 – 5 3. * 4. 1 – 5 5. 1 – 5 6. 1 – 5 7. 1 – 5 8. Time constraints affect planning 9. * 10. Most times its hard to get them to come in
Do community resource people get invited to be guest speakers or facilitators in your classroom?	1. No 2. Yes 3. No 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes – heath unit, I invite a person (farmer) who runs a dairy farm to talk to the children about where milk comes from, then we visit a farm 7. No 8. No – resource people get invited but not to mine, whole school events or certain grades 9. No 10. Yes
If yes, how many resource people (provided general numeric categories).	1. * 2. 1 – 5 3. * 4. 1 – 5 5. 1 – 5 6. 1 – 5 7. * 8. * 9. * 10. 1 – 5
Do you conduct fieldtrips to the many historical locations in Sagamok First Nation	1. Yes – when done as a school project i.e. All Soul's Day

as part of your classroom content?	2. Yes 3. No 4. Yes 5. No 6. Yes 7. No 8. No – resources (bus, parents), lack of time to plan 9. No 10. No – I would like to take the children, however time and safety is a concern
If yes, which ones?	1. Cemetery 2. Sugar Bushes 3. * 4. Indian Head, Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, Sugar Bushes 5. * 6. Sugar Bushes 7. * 8. * 9. * 10. Fort Lacloche, Sagamok Point, Sugar Bushes
Is the native culture, history and traditions important to the overall classroom content?	1. Yes, especially in the non-rotary grades (primary/junior) 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. No 10. Yes
Is the native language important to the overall classroom content?	1. Yes, staff should be encouraged to use it more 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. Yes 10. Yes
Is the use of local Elders and resource people important to the overall classroom content?	1. Yes, with the development of curriculum. I think there will be more opportunity for this. 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. No 10. Yes
Is the inclusion of local historical locations important to the overall classroom content?	1. Yes, students must become more aware of their community in order to instil pride and self-esteem.

	2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes 6. Yes 7. Yes 8. Yes 9. Yes, if we are to include into particular lessons 10. Yes
Questions, comments & thoughts	1. * 2. * 3. * 4. * 5. * 6. * 7. Transportation and volunteers are a big asset in accomplishing field trips 8. * 9. * 10. *

Note: * indicates that there is no comment or that this is not applicable.

Table 3 – Education Committee Responses to Survey Regarding Native Culture and Language in School Curriculum

Questions	Responses
Should the native culture, history and traditions be included in the school's overall classrooms content?	1. Yes 2. Yes – before they leave for high school 3. Yes – to some degree 4. Yes – Young people in our community should know more about where they came from 5. Yes – present issues affecting us 6. Yes – we are the Anishinabek, they need to know who they are. 7. Yes – if we wish our history to be retained the children are the best to hold these important values.
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. * 2. 21 – 30% - in several classes (geography, history, English, the arts), bring out relative reasoning to what they are learning in the same view of English language. 3. 31 – 40% - culture, history and traditions are an important aspect, however they should not overpower regular class learning 4. 21 – 30% 5. 51 – 60% 6. more than 81% - use nature and what Mother Earth supplies to us as teaching tools 7. 51 – 60% - Certain phases in student's activities can greatly benefit them if carefully implemented – equal exposure with both worlds will bring balance to the student.
Should the native language be included in the	1. Yes 2. yes/no (because it confuses their learning

school's overall classrooms content?	identity), both because aboriginal we should be proud of our language. 3. Yes 4. Yes – It would be very good for the young people to keep our language going. A lot of older people don't speak or understand it. 5. Yes – repetition and consistency 6. Yes – at levels they understand 7. Yes – Exposure to the language on a daily basis reinforces the learner's retentions of certain words/phrases.
If yes, identify the overall percentage (provided general categories).	1. more than 81% for grade 4 and down, 41 – 50% for grades 5 to 8 2. 21 – 30% 3. 51 -- 60% - children should be taught Ojibway in many of these classes 4. 21 – 30% 5. 21 – 30% 6. more than 81% - as much as possible and the capability of teacher 7. 51 – 60%
Are you fluent in the native language?	1. No 2. No 3. No 4. No – I went to school off reserve and the two languages were French and English. I never got to learn our language in school like our kids are being taught. They should consider themselves lucky. 5. Yes – kids need to hear it over and over again because it's easier to hear orally. 6. Yes – modern Anishnawbe language but not the language of the 1700/1800 Anishnawbe 7. Yes
Should community Elders invited and present in the school's classrooms?	1. Yes, but hasn't been done yet 2. Yes, if they are interested 3. Yes 4. Yes – Our Elders have so much to offer both historically and culturally, along with language, a lot of first hand experience. 5. Yes – if they want to and as long as its relevant 6. Yes – children learn from Elders and Elders learn from children Make a better community. 7. Yes – Ample time should be allowed for Elders participation.
If yes, how many times a year (provided general numeric categories).	1. * 2. 11 – 15, at least 2 times a month 3. 1 – 5 – our Elders are valuable resources 4. 6 – 10 5. 1 – 5 6. more than 15 times – as much as possible and in their direct knowledge. 7. more than 15 times – Children will be accustomed to being with the Elder – hearing the language will assist the student to learn language and history.
	1. Yes

Should community resource people be invited to be guest speakers or facilitators in the school's classrooms?	2. Yes – every person you meet is a resource person, every day people, members, residents have much to offer 3. Yes – Our community speakers or facilitators will positively impact their learning and will reduce costs of other facilitators 4. Yes – They could let the students know what kind of services are available in our community, that if they should need help or someone to talk to they'll know where to go. 5. Yes 6. Yes – this provides for a change of atmosphere for the students and students receive different points of view. 7. Yes
If yes, how many resource people (provided general numeric categories).	1. more than 15 people – using 15+ is a way of saying we need to teach the arts and crafts, stories (drama), regalia making to our kids 2. 11 – 15, the same, 2 times a month 3. 1 – 5 4. 6 – 10 5. 1 – 5, usually one or two 6. more than 15 people – as many as possible without replacing the teacher. Teacher needs to teach with the resource person. 7. 1 – 5, Selected resource people should be slotted on a regular basis.
Should fieldtrips to the many historical locations in Sagamok First Nation be part of the school's classrooms content?	1. Yes – with Elders/Resource People to tell the legends and/or stories about these places. It would be great for the kids to know. 2. Yes – history = identity 3. Yes 4. Yes – they could learn more about our home with hands on experience. 5. Yes – if relevant to course content or history 6. Yes – The children need to know Sagamok and surrounding communities and the people. 7. Yes
	1. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort

If yes, which ones?	Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes 2. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes, Little Detroit, Shoepack Bay, Boat tour of Sagamok Waters 3. Spanish River, Sagamok Point, Fort Lacloche – these provide students with important historical info while the others hold cultural significance 4. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes 5. Spanish River, Indian Head, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes 6. Spanish River, Indian Head, Spirit (replace Devil's) Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – all listed, each grade can visit each area at certain grades. 7. Spanish River, Indian Head, Devil's Lake, Fort Lacloche Toulouse Bay, Sagamok Point, McBean Mountain, Sugar Bushes – visiting these sites will reinforce the students retention of history within the community.
Do you think that the native culture, history and traditions are important to the overall classrooms content?	1. Overall 2. Yes, if it can't be taught at home it should be taught at school 3. Yes - combined 4. Yes 5. Yes – instils pride 6. Yes – We are the Anishnawbek. 7. Yes
Do you think that the native language is important to the overall classrooms content?	1. Yes – in the younger grades, they catch on better 2. Yes – to our identity 3. Yes 4. Yes – the more the students hear it the better they will understand and speak it. 5. Yes – consistency 6. Yes – We need to know that we are the Anishnawbek as a first language. 7. Yes
Do you think that the use of local Elders and resource people is important to the overall classrooms content?	1. * 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes – as long as its relevant to course content 6. Yes – Children need to know who to turn to if they need help. 7. Yes
Do you think that the inclusion of local historical locations is important to the overall classroom content?	1. Yes 2. Yes, personal growth and development should be incorporated 3. Yes 4. Yes 5. Yes – I believe our children need to learn their

	history 6. Yes – Children must know the Anishnawbe trail. 7. Yes
Questions, comments & thoughts	1. * 2. * 3. Indeed our culture, history and traditions are important and should be considered they not however overpower the other areas of study. 4. * 5. Questions are repetitive 6. * 7. Interaction with local resource people will the students in learning about the community.

Note: * indicates that there is no comment or that this is not applicable.